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California Postsecondary Education Commission
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News Release

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Claremont Graduate University – Pitzer College – Pomona Unified School District partnership receives \$935,090 to address achievement gap

SACRAMENTO — December 5, 2008 — A partnership between Claremont Graduate University Teacher Education Internship Program, Pitzer College Mathematics Field Group, and the Pomona Unified School District has won funding for a new professional development project to help improve elementary school teaching in the core content area of mathematics. The partnership has been awarded a four-year Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) grant of \$935,090 by the California Postsecondary Education Commission.

The “Making Algebra Accessible Project” will serve teachers at two elementary schools in the Pomona Unified School District. More than 68 teachers will be trained to better prepare their students in math skills that will enable them to succeed in algebra when they reach middle school. The selected schools—Madison Elementary and Pueblo K-8—have seen a very high achievement gap for Latino and African American children compared with white children in the district, and the grant intends to narrow that gap significantly in those schools.

The project focuses on math because of its importance to academic success and also to respond to the state’s new requirement that all students take Algebra I in 8th grade, making it more important than ever to prepare them well in lower grades. The grant is part of the federal ITQ program, funded through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 to provide high quality professional development.

Over the past two decades, the Commission has awarded more than 200 ITQ grants totaling \$110 million. The 2008 grants, totaling \$5.8 million, address California’s achievement gap based on race, ethnicity, or language. The grants improve classroom strategies in core subjects. The grants require rigorous evaluation to demonstrate how professional development affects student achievement.

“While the professional development provided by the grants is vital, the evaluation requirement is especially important,” the Commission’s Executive Director Murray J. Haberman said. “Being required to demonstrate the impact of professional development on student success, not just on

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teacher practice, supports the Commission's commitment to accountability in educational programs."

Commission Chair Olivia K. Singh said, "The grant plays an important role in making sure every student has the opportunity to learn from a highly qualified teacher. The teachers who participate will learn new techniques to address the needs of students and help them become lifelong learners."

The partnership will have to demonstrate successful implementation of the grant during its first year before it receives full funding for the total four year period.

More information may be found online at

<http://www.cpec.ca.gov/federalprograms/teacherquality.asp>.

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The California Postsecondary Education Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. The Commission's primary focus is to ensure that the state's educational resources are used effectively to provide Californians with postsecondary education opportunities.